Kentucky

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) approved the first nationally registered K-12 teacher apprenticeship program in January 2022, opening the door to a rapidly growing pathway for prospective teachers. DOL has now approved registered teacher apprenticeships in more than 30 states. Kentucky's first program is registered through the Kentucky Career Center, which is operated by the state's Office of Employer and Apprenticeship Services. The Kentucky Department of Education is currently seeking federal approval for a statewide registered program.

What Is Teacher Apprenticeship?

Teacher apprenticeship is an "earn and learn" pathway to a teaching credential that provides structured, paid, on-the-job learning experiences combined with job-related technical instruction and mentorship. Teacher candidates serving as apprentices are paid by their employer while they participate in the program, helping to make their pathway into the profession more affordable.

Kentucky Teacher Pathways by the Numbers

apprenticeship partnerships

through Western Kentucky

University (WKU)



hours of coursework

and on-the-job training

for youth apprentices

6,000

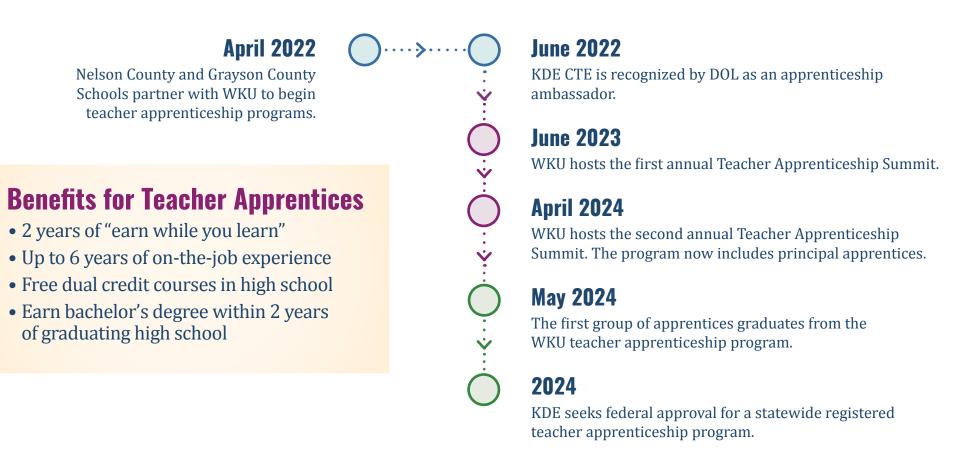
Kentucky on TRACK

The Kentucky Department of Education Office of Career and Technical Education (KDE CTE) partnership with the Kentucky Department of Workforce Development Office of Apprenticeship was recognized by the DOL in 2022 as an apprenticeship ambassador. The Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky (TRACK) youth apprenticeship model provides secondary students with career pathway opportunities and registered apprenticeships. Within TRACK, the Office of Educator Licensure and Effectiveness and KDE CTE opened an education career pathway to recruit a diverse and effective workforce from the state's population of high school students.

How It Works

Building on the pathway opportunities of TRACK and partnering with WKU, students in Nelson County School District can join the registered teacher apprenticeship program in ninth grade. From the start, the students receive 2.5 hours daily of experiential learning. During their 4-year high school career, students participate in dual credit enrollment to attain 59 hours of college credit as well as 24 hours toward teacher certification. The paid youth apprenticeship starts in the student's junior or senior year. Upon graduation, the student apprentices will continue to be paid employees of Nelson County Schools and enrolled at WKU to complete the remaining 61 hours toward a bachelor's degree.

Journey to Teacher Apprenticeship



Educators Rising

The Educators Rising affiliate in Kentucky supports middle and high school students who are interested in education-related careers. WKU's active chapter of Educators Rising intersects with the work of developing teacher apprenticeship infrastructure. In April 2024, they hosted the second annual Teacher Apprenticeship Summit, featuring the introduction of the first Kentucky registered principal apprenticeship program—which is only the second of its kind in the country—as well as guidance on navigating the DOL requirements and expectations for registered apprenticeships. This summit provided information to school district administrators and other educator preparation providers to support the development and implementation of new registered apprenticeship programs for the training of both teachers and principals.

Funding Teacher Apprenticeship



- As of this writing, participating school districts provide funding for teacher apprenticeship programs.
- · WKU is partnering with school districts to match tuition funding.
- Finding sufficient funding for apprenticeship programs is a significant obstacle to expanding their reach.
- KDE is actively seeking State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula Grants from DOL, which will increase access to additional funding streams.

Lessons Learned from Kentucky

- Funding is a big hurdle: Districts are regularly asked to do more with less, and the lack of a steady funding stream is a major limiting factor in developing apprenticeship programs. Sustainable funding will lead to a sustainable program.
- It's all in who you know: Apprenticeship models give districts an opportunity to tap into the potential of .students who may have never considered pursuing an education career. This will also help to foster greater diversity within school systems.
- Many hands make light work: Building a statewide teacher apprenticeship program includes collaboration and communication, tapping into all of the support, offices, and expertise that are available.



Want to Learn More about Teacher Apprenticeships in Kentucky?

Watch the Kentucky Teacher Apprenticeship video series Check out the TeachKY and Educators Rising webpage